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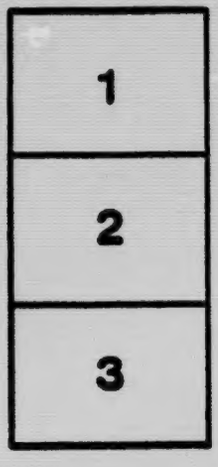

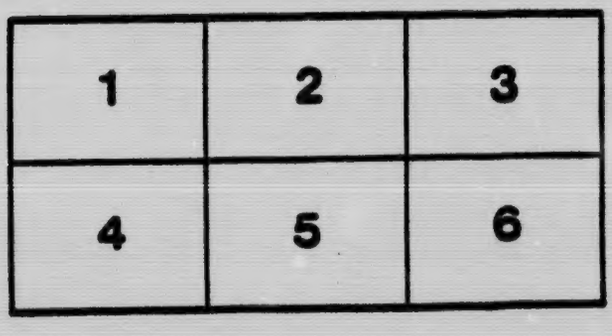

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The Dew of Hermon

OR

Dwelling Together in Unity

AN ODE ON TWO DEVOTED SISTERS

BY

J. ALBERT THORNE

M.B., C.M. Edinr.

Author of Britannia's Pride: "Barbados, the Gem of the Antilles"—a patriotic ode; "A Nation That's Bless'd"—an ode on the Coronation of His Most Gracious Majesty, King George the Fifth, and His Consort Queen Mary; "The Moral of King Edward's Life and Death: 'I think I have done my duty'"—an elegy; "Sweeter than the Nightingale"; &c., &c.

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DEDICATION

THIS poem, a farewell ode, is dedicated to these two sisters, white ladies, as a tribute of respect, and as a token of gratitude for their hospitality to me during a period of fourteen years' residence in Jamaica —kindness such as I have received only from England's best.

The attachment of these two sisters to one another impressed me much, and brought vividly before me, time and again, that beautiful simile of the Inspired Psalmist, from which the title of the poem is taken: "As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded His blessing, even life for evermore"—two devoted sisters, the one well into the last decade of her century, the other past the allotted span by more than half a score—a record of unbroken unity and un-

changing love. They treated me with great respect—kind friends I never can forget.—

Away with your prejudice and its curse! Away with your libel against the Most High! God hath made of one blood all races of men, to dwell together in perfect unity, as in Heaven His throne, so also on earth His foot-stool.

J. A. T.

Jamaica, W.I.,
January 31, 1913.

NOTE.—Written in Jamaica as above stated; published for the first time in our enterprising great Dominion.

Toronto, Ontario, Canada,
December, 1920.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

The Dew of Hermon

CANTO I

THE JUNIOR SISTER
(The Nurse)

1. A BIRTHDAY SALUTATION

ANOTHER year comes round to-day,
Hail, lady fair, on thy birthday!
Still many more I wish for thee,
And each more bright and cheerful be.

* * * * *

As when the Golden Orb of Day
The shades of night doth chase away,
A penetrating ray doth shed
Upon a darken'd cloud o'erhead,
Refulgent shines till light doth die
Away at eve on western sky,
So may the Sun encircle thee
Of Righteousness; keep safe and free

From clouds. And, when thy task is done,
Give sweet repose like setting sun.

2. HER HOME AND WORK

Health, happiness and peace be thine,
And blessings all that human kind
Most prize, and Heaven sees most fit;
To cheer the home where thou dost sit
Each day and hour, and year by year,
And, with a woman's tender care,
Thy sister well belov'd doth nurse,
Till Death's cold wave—the sting and curse
Of sin—shall o'er her roll. Thy love—
The love that cometh from above,
Pure, broad and deep, unchanging, strong;
No ill doth think, and suff'reth long,
Nor vaunted is, but humble too;
This greatest gift of all, yet few,
E'en sisters, have the gift possess'd,
Been with its fine emotions bless'd—
Constraining thee that sacred heart
To watch beside, and not depart.
Like angels bright their vigils keep
The saints of God around; and sleep

Nor day nor night. Each need supplied:
And order there, whate'er betide.
Each requisite of hers is sure,
Physician or his balm to cure,
Or Earth's nutritious stores that frame
To nourish and sustain. The same
Kind thought itself doth manifest,
In soothing speech, and all the rest
Of kindly deeds to comfort give
Thy well-belov'd, while she doth live.

* * * * *

And why should not thine heart o'erflow?
Intrinsic love she did bestow.
Fond parents knelt with both at prayer,
And ask'd for Grace and Mercy there.
She walk'd beside thee to the church,
With thee the Psalms and Hymns did search;
Together skipped in dale, on hill,
At home, at school, and by the rill.
A sister, yet a mother she,
In counsel wise and ways to thee.

* * * * *

Twain lives in sweet communion spent;
By anger or by strife unrent.

Thy mirth, it lighted up her soul;
Depression mirth away did roll.
The sorrow that to thee was sore,
That sorrow it distress'd her more;
And mortal eye it ne'er did see
Two sisters more in unity.

* * * * *

Ah! yes; a pleasant thing and good,
For brethren if they only would,—
And meant for sisters this as well—
In unity together dwell!
'Tis like the Holy Oil outpour'd
On Aaron's head, and as it flow'd,
It trickled down from head to beard,
His sacerdotal garb besmear'd.
So like this Oil is Unity,
A good and pleasant thing to see;
Like Zion's Mount its blessings too,
And it of Hermon is the dew.

3. THE NIECE

(A Faithful Helper)

And, when at length thy flesh doth tire,
And sleep thine eyelid doth require—

For flesh, alas! must feel the strain,
As years roll by and come again,
Of close confinement thereupon,
A well-matured and feeble one—
Replaced by her, so thoughtful, mild,
Well-trained by thee, thy sister's child;
Like Mary at the Master's feet,
And waiting with devotion sweet,
The benediction of her Lord
Her goal is, and her reward—

* * * * *

"Well done, thou faithful soul and good
In few things thou hast faithful stood;
Of many thou shalt ruler be,
To thy Lord's joy, an entrance thee.
A sick and suff'ring one didst tend,
Thy hand to heal her wound didst lend,
Done unto one, the least it be,
Thou'st done it also unto Me."

CANTO II

THE SENIOR SISTER
(The Patient)

And suff'ring she, in silence lies,
Grave's vict'ry won, Death's sting defies.
For God her covenant had seal'd
From youth; and she, the law repeal'd
Of sin and Death, by Him who died
For all, had had to her applied.
Good Christian soul she since has been!
Among the best that I have seen.

* * * * *

The Consolation Great she heard,
She took the Saviour at His word—
"He that believes on Me, the same
Shall never die, for hence I came.
And he shall live, though he should die;
The Life and Resurrection I."

* * * * *

But how the thought can she dispel,
Though Victor over Death and Hell,

Her friends must leave and Earth forsake,
Its adamantine ties must break?

* * * * *

Without a pang? Without a tear?—
To part from friends so kind? so dear?
Their faces never to behold
Again on Earth, where friendships old
And tried, and peaceful as the dove,
Attest the power of human love?

* * * * *

Can one forget the toil and pain
Of Egypt, and its firstborn slain?
Forget the blood-besprinkl'd door,
Passport of man ordained before
He full deliverance could claim
And triumph in Jehovah's Name?
The sea divided by His hand,
To lead His people through on land?
From peril He His own did keep,
Immersed the foe into the deep?

* * * * *

Oh, no! Inhuman 'tis to think,
That firm upon the Jordan's brink,

Transported with the prospect fine,
We should not cast a glance behind.
The landscape must the soul inspire,
And fill the heart with warm desire,
That lov'd ones left Earth's toil to bear
Might there with us the rapture share.

2. THE FAREWELL

(All Three)

And now, dear friends, a long farewell!
Your kindness I shall ever tell.
I wish ye grace abundantly,
And blessings great exceedingly:
From day to day delight to find
In triumphs won by Love Divine.